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Municipal structure and citizens' attitudes

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MUNICIPAL STRUCTURE
" AND
CITIZENS' ATTITUDES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Government
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

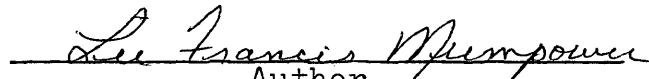
In Partial Fulfilment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Lee Francis Mumpower
1979


APPROVAL SHEET

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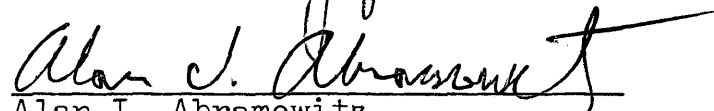
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FOR DEBBIE

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L.F.M.

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ABSTRACT

The municipal reforms of the early twentieth century resulted in two basic forms of governing structures: reformed (a city manager or commission system) and unreformed (a mayor and city council parallel to the national executive and legislative form).

Researchers have studied how the two governing forms differ in population composition and policy outputs. This study is interested in how the structure of municipal government affects citizens' attitudes toward city services.

Attitudes of respondents in the two city types were compared. Differences among the respondents based upon socioeconomic characteristics were also investigated. While these did influence the respondent's answers on some questions, there were differences based upon the form of municipal government.

The results suggest that respondents who live in cities with a city manager or commission government are more satisfied with the way their city is run and the services they receive. Another interesting result is the attitude of nonwhites. While they believe that the city government is better than in the past, they consistently give negative ratings when asked specific questions, indicating the gap between what they have achieved and what they believe they should have achieved.

MUNICIPAL STRUCTURE
AND
CITIZENS' ATTITUDES

INTRODUCTION

City government structures in the United States take a variety of forms. Some cities use the strong mayor-council form with its executive-legislative dichotomy. Others use the council-manager type with a professional city manager administering the daily operations of the city. Town meetings and the commission system are other less popular methods used to govern cities.

The commission and council-manager methods originated during the Progressive Era in the early twentieth century. It was believed that these good government reforms would result in more efficient and responsive administrations. In recent years, social scientists have attempted to investigate policy differences in reformed (commission and manager cities) and unreformed (strong mayor) cities.

Little research has attempted to establish the relationship between structure and citizens' attitudes. The main pursuit of this study is to determine if citizens perceive differences in the level and equality of services provided by reformed and unreformed cities. Citizen attitudes toward their local government in ten American cities will be examined, paying particular attention to differences between reformed and unreformed cities.

The central hypothesis of this study is: The

structure of a city government (reformed or unreformed) has an impact on attitudes; citizen satisfaction will be greater in reformed cities than in unreformed ones. In theory, reformed cities are less political in nature, concerned with citywide needs rather than particular interests. Because of this, citizens will feel that their city is well administered, that services are equally distributed among neighborhoods, that taxes are fair, and that officials are honest. Given the more political nature of unreformed cities, in which different sections of the city are represented on council and there are struggles for scarce resources, citizens will feel that the administration of their city has not improved and may have actually deteriorated over time, that services are unequally distributed, that taxes are unfair, and that government officials are somewhat less than honest than businessmen in the city.

It may be that any differences discovered between the two types of cities do not result from structural characteristics. Instead, socioeconomic characteristics of the population may explain differences in attitudes and also influence the type of city structure. This alternative hypothesis will be considered when analyzing the data.

The hypothesis will be tested by using data from a 1970 citizen attitude survey of ten American cities conducted by the Urban Observatory Program. The survey

obtained information on citizens' perceptions on a wide range of urban problems and how well citizens believed that their city was handling the problems.¹

Before examining citizen attitudes, it is necessary to understand why there are differences in city structure. This will be followed by a review of literature that has investigated the link between city structure and policy output.

¹Data utilized in this thesis was made available in part by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. Data for the "Citizen Attitude Survey: Urban Problems in Ten American Cities" study was originally collected by the Urban Observatory Program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and administered by the National League of Cities. Neither they nor the Consortium bear any responsibility for the analysis or interpretations presented here. They are the author's own.

CHAPTER I

REFORMISM: ITS ORIGINS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

City Reform

By the late nineteenth century, the urban political machine, run by the shady "boss" figure, ruled many of America's cities. The explosion of urban growth caused by immigration, the disorganized structure of local governments, the needs of the population and of businessmen, and unrestricted suffrage, coupled with the individualism and opportunism of the time, nurtured the growth of the urban machines.² Only a strong and powerful leader could organize the fragmented government, a remnant of the days of Jacksonian democracy, to bring amenities and essential services to the city-dweller and employment for the immigrant. Only a "boss" who knew the details of all the city departments could help businessmen who needed permits for plants or wanted contracts with the city. In return, the "boss" received payoffs, favors, and other corrupt arrangements.

As cities swelled with immigrants, the native Yankee-

²Fred I. Greenstein, The American Party System And The American People, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 45-47.

Protestant American became resentful of how they were being used by the bosses. In exchange for votes, "the machine provided quick naturalization, jobs, social services, personal access to authority, release from the surveillance of the courts, deference to ethnic pride."³ The native reformer had lofty goals and ideals about how government should be run. These conflicted with the past experience of the immigrants, who were familiar with autocratic rule, not democracy. Their present needs also conflicted with the reformers ideas. The immigrants experience could not relate to the reformers abstract ideas about citizenship, responsible good government, businesslike management. Because of the gulf between them, reformers were to gather their greatest strength and support from native Yankees.

Reformers wanted to change the method by which politics was conducted. Machines ruled by controlling nominations and by organizing loyal workers and a core of voters that were turned out at each primary election. Winning the primary practically guaranteed election to office. Because of the low turnout, the boss only needed a small number of votes. Given his control over the party workers, he was able to get the votes required.⁴

³Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 176.

⁴Alan Shank and Ralph W. Conant, Urban Perspectives, (Boston: Holbrook Press, Inc., 1975), p. 19.

Because the system was built upon a foundation of wards and districts, it was impossible for reform governments to succeed. They would win some elections, then be followed by a new wave of politics as usual under the machines.

To combat this, reformers wanted to transform the governmental system to one that they felt had existed in the past. This could be done by concentrating on raising the morale of the citizen and pushing through changes such as direct primaries, referendum, recall, a short ballot, and commission government. These changes would break the machine and make government more efficient.⁵

Reformers felt that by changing the institutions of government, "politics" would be removed from the handling of affairs. Through at-large elections, citywide needs would be addressed, rather than needs of specific neighborhoods. Nonpartisanship would relieve the excesses of party politics. Above all, problems could be addressed in an administrative and businesslike manner.⁶

One of the first "government as business" plans to be adopted was the commission form. It was first introduced in Galveston, Texas in 1901. The commission is a small body (three to seven members), who are elected at-large on nonpartisan ballots. The mayor is either the highest vote-getter or is selected from among his colleagues,

⁵Hofstadter, p. 255.

⁶Shank and Conant, p. 74.

serves as the presiding officer at meetings, and is the ceremonial head of the city. All of the commissioners function as equals. Executive and legislative functions are fused. Together, commissioners make overall policy; individually, they carry out policy as heads of particular city departments.⁷ By 1910, the system was utilized in 108 different cities.⁸

The second type of structure initiated by reformers, and the most successful, was the council-manager plan. This form takes the idea of "government as business" a step further by installing a professional manager to administer the daily operations of city departments. Council, which is elected at-large and on nonpartisan ballots, appoints a manager as the city's chief administrative officer. Council makes policy, but it is not charged with its implementation.

Reformers were successful in getting the council-manager and commission systems adopted in a large number of cities, but they were not as successful in having these forms put into place in cities dominated by urban machines. Currently, reform governments exist in 55 percent of all cities with a population of at least 5000. As Table 1 shows, the types of cities most likely to have this form

⁷Ibid, pp. 90-91.

⁸Robert L. Lineberry and Ira Sharkansky, Urban Politics and Public Policy, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), p. 120.

TABLE 1

FORM OF GOVERNMENT IN CITIES OVER 5000*

Classification	No. of cities reporting (A)	Mayor- Council No.	% of (A)	Council- Manager No.	% of (A)	Commission No.	% of (A)
Total, all cities	1822	825	45	886	49	111	6
Population group							
Over 500,000	16	13	81	3	19	0	0
250,000-500,000	24	12	50	9	38	3	13
100,000-250,000	74	29	39	38	51	9	10
50,000-100,000	176	61	35	95	52	10	6
25,000-50,000	348	125	36	204	59	19	5
10,000-25,000	698	301	43	350	50	47	7
5,000-10,000	486	274	56	187	38	25	5
Geographic region							
Northeast	390	223	57	146	37	21	5
North Central	589	328	56	217	37	44	7
South	496	173	35	286	58	37	7
West	347	101	29	237	68	9	3
City type							
Central	205	89	43	96	47	20	10
Suburban	855	400	49	430	50	25	3
Independent	762	336	44	360	47	66	7

SOURCE: Adapted from The Municipal Year Book, 1972 (Washington, D.C.: The International City Managers' Association), p. 16.

*Cities with town meetings excluded.

of government are those with a population between 10,000 and 500,000 and those located in the South and West. These are not characteristics of cities usually associated with urban machines.

Commission and manager-council governments, along with short ballots, nonpartisanship, and at-large elections, weakened urban machines, but by themselves, they did not kill them. Besides the impact of the good government reformers, the power of the urban boss declined as he lost his resources, such as patronage, due to a merit-based civil service, and the welfare policies of the New Deal. Internal rivalries and fewer needs by an upwardly mobile population also contributed. Although the days of the boss are long past (in most instances), many cities still have unreformed structures.

Structure and Policy

Do reformed and unreformed cities, which differ in structure, also differ in policy output? Researchers have contrasted economic and social variables between the two types of cities, but not as much has been done to examine structure's affect on policy. Froman was one of the first to bring together numerous studies of urban public policies.⁹ He argued that it was neccessary to move beyond case studies and normative approaches. He put forward

⁹Lewis A. Froman, Jr., "An Analysis of Public Policies in Cities," Journal of Politics, XXIX:1 (February 1967), pp. 94-108.

two types of policy choices in cities. The first he called areal policies. These policies affect the entire population, take place in a single action, and everyone is affected simultaneously. Examples of this type of policy are annexation proceedings, intermunicipal cooperation, and flouridation and educational services. Areal policies are associated with homogeneous communities, (communities that have low social and economic diversity).¹⁰ These are the types of communities that adopt a reformed government, usually council-manager.¹¹

The second type deals with policies that affect small segments of the population, affect them at different times, and are continuing programs, such as urban renewal and welfare. Froman labels these segmental policies and finds that they are associated with heterogeneous cities (those with high social and economic diversity).¹² These types of communities tend to have unreformed structures.

Lineberry and Fowler offer a detailed study on how reformed and unreformed cities react to socioeconomic variables in terms of policy output.¹³ Their thesis is that the structure of government causes different types of

¹⁰Ibid, p. 108.

¹¹Shank and Conant, pp. 94-96.

¹²Froman, p. 108.

¹³Robert L. Lineberry and Edmund P. Fowler, "Reformism and Public Policies in American Cities," in James Q. Wilson, ed. City Politics and Public Policy, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1968), pp. 97-123.

policy, even though the composition of the population may be similar. The policy outputs analyzed were taxes and expenditures.

The authors found that reformed cities "both spend and tax less than unreformed cities."¹⁴ They also found that the type of city government and socioeconomic conflict are related. Reformed cities govern more on the basis of businesslike, rationalistic administration, and less on the basis of conflict among groups. This is consistent with the finding that unreformed cities, which tax and spend more, have a larger proportion of religious and ethnic minorities.¹⁵ Unreformed cities react more to these cleavages in their population. Conversely, the greater the reformism of a city, the lower its responsiveness to segmental politics. "Thus, political institutions seem to play an important role in the political process"¹⁶

In his study of regional and structural impact on urban policy, Cole hypothesized that reformed cities would spend more for planning and urban renewal.¹⁷ He found that reformed cities did spend more per capita

¹⁴Ibid, p. 108.

¹⁵Ibid, pp. 116-117.

¹⁶Ibid, p. 121.

¹⁷Richard L. Cole, "The Urban Policy Process. A Note on Structural and Regional Influences," Social Science Quarterly, 52:3 (December 1971), pp. 646-655.

on city planning. But, he found a contradiction between per capita urban renewal funds and structure. Unreformed cities were more likely to request a larger amount than reformed cities. Cole believed that because of this, structure did not have an impact on policy. This interpretation is open to argument. Unreformed cities are often older cities and may be in need of urban renewal. And, given the more political nature of unreformed cities, it is possible that urban renewal funds are a symbol of what the councilman is doing for his constituency. The funds are also resources that can be distributed by the councilman. If true, then structure can be said to have an influence on policy.

In a recent article on the relationship between structure and policy, Lyons examined spending levels of cities, using as his measure the city's own expenditure effort apart from state and federal assistance.¹⁸ He hypothesized that reformed cities would respond to changes in their environment that demanded less spending, while unreformed cities would respond to demands for more spending. Unreformed cities would also increase their spending when resources were available. Lyons' findings confirmed his hypotheses. Spending levels in unreformed cities increased with availability of resources. Unreformed

¹⁸William Lyons, "Reform and Response In American Cities: Structure and Policy Revisited," Social Science Quarterly, 59:1 (June 1978), pp. 118-132.

cities also responded to pressure to increase spending; reformed cities responded to pressures to reduce spending.

The studies reviewed indicate that there is some relation between the structure of municipal government and policies. Cities with reformed governments tend to be more businesslike, frugal, to carefully plan, implement policies designed to affect everyone, and need only one implementation. Unreformed cities tend to be less businesslike, respond to pressures to spend, and implement policies on a piecemeal basis.

Before turning to the question of whether or not structure affects citizen attitudes, it will be helpful to look at how some of the data used in answering the question has been utilized in the past.

Citizen Survey Data

Data generated by the citizen attitude survey used in this study has been reviewed in several sources. Lynn Foster used the results to test James Q. Wilson's hypothesis of "urban unease."¹⁹ She compared citizens' attitudes on urban unease (defined as improper behavior in public places--violence, crime, racial tension, public immorality, delinquency), with attitudes on conventional urban problems (housing, transportation, urban renewal). Wilson had found that his subjects

¹⁹Lynn Foster, "Dimensions of 'Urban Unease' in Ten Cities," Urban Affairs Quarterly, X:2 (December 1974), pp. 185-194.

were more concerned with urban unease. As a measure of urban unease, Foster used the following questions from the attitude survey:²⁰

- 1) In what ways, if any, could the local government do a better job here in (City)?
- 2) Think about the things in the city that you think need to be changed, fixed up, or given special attention. What things do you think of as most important in making this city a better place to live?
- 3) Are there any public facilities or services in this neighborhood you especially would like to see improved? If yes, which ones?
- 4) Are there any serious ways that either this house or this neighborhood is not a good place for you (and your family) to live? If yes, what is that?

Foster discovered little to support Wilson's hypothesis in the ten cities. The evidence indicated "that the vast majority of urban residents do conceive of the urban crisis in terms of conventional problems, though cities differ on which of these are of most concern."²¹ Just how structure affects these attitudes on conventional urban problems will later be seen.

In a 1976 work, David Caputo used the data to make some broad generalizations about how citizens felt toward their local government.²² In responding to a question about whether the city had gotten better, worse,

²⁰Ibid, pp. 186-187.

²¹Ibid, p. 192.

²²David Caputo, Urban America: The Policy Alternatives, (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1970).

or stayed the same over the past ten years, Caputo found that most respondents thought their city had changed very little, and that the changes were for the better.²³

Caputo also found that while most respondents felt that the city was being run well enough, they did not believe they were "receiving the full benefits in city services for their tax dollars."²⁴ A third also questioned the honesty and integrity of local officials. The three questions that Caputo has examined will be examined in chapter two in relation to how answers are affected when structure and socioeconomic characteristics are analyzed.

* * * * *

To this point, we have examined the origins of reformed structures in city government, some studies that link structure to certain policies, and how some of the survey data has been used in the past. Now, we shall see if structure also has an impact upon the way citizens view their local government.

²³Ibid, p. 58.

²⁴Ibid, p. 63, italics in original.

CHAPTER II

ATTITUDES AND STRUCTURE

In 1970, the Urban Observatory Program of the National League of Cities, with a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, conducted a survey of ten American cities to discover citizens' perceptions of urban problems, their attitudes toward local government, and its services. Perceptions may not always reflect objective reality, but they are what a person believes, and to him, they are reality. They are often the only measurement available.

Albuquerque, Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Denver, Kansas City, (Kansas), Kansas City, (Missouri), Milwaukee, Nashville, and San Diego were the cities surveyed. They vary in size of population, percent nonwhite, and region (Table 2).

This study examines differences between cities with reformed and unreformed governments. For this study, the type of executive leadership was a strong determinant, although partisanship and the method of electing council were also considered. Reformed cities have at least two of the following characteristics: a city manager or commission, nonpartisan elections, councils elected

TABLE 2

POPULATION, FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR PARTICIPATING CITIES (1970)

City	Population	% Change 1960-1970	% Nonwhite	Form of Government
Albuquerque	243,751	21.2	36.9	Council-Manager*
Kansas City, Ka	168,213	38.0	20.0	Commission
Kansas City, Mo	507,087	6.7	24.9	Council-Manager
San Diego	696,769	21.6	20.7	Council-Manager
Atlanta	496,973	2.0	52.0	Mayor-Council
Baltimore	905,759	-3.5	46.9	Mayor-Council
Boston	641,071	-8.1	18.8	Mayor-Council
Denver	514,678	4.2	25.8	Mayor-Council
Milwaukee	717,099	-3.2	17.2	Mayor-Council
Nashville	447,877	162.1**	20.6	Mayor-Council

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book, 1972 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

*In 1975, Albuquerque adopted a Mayor-Council form of government.

**Nashville's growth is due in part to a 1962 consolidation with neighboring Davidson County.

at-large. Cities which exhibit at least two of the following are considered unreformed: a separately elected mayor, partisan elections, ward or district council elections. Table 3 shows the cities electoral characteristics.

Citizen attitudes on how their city was run, neighborhood schools, police and other city employees, and taxes are examined. The question is: After controlling for socioeconomic variables, does the structure of a city government influence a person's attitudes? If there is a structural difference, do citizens in reformed cities feel more positive toward their local government?

Findings

Did citizens in 1970 believe that their cities were presently being run better than in 1960 or 1965? As Table 4 illustrates, most respondents perceived that their cities were being run better than in the past. Contrary to expectations, more citizens in unreformed cities felt that their city was run better than in the past than did residents of reformed cities. Respondents in unreformed cities were sharply divided on the question, however, with substantial minorities at opposite ends of the scale. A clear majority of those in reformed cities felt little change had occurred in their city's operation.

While positive evaluations rise with education and income levels, structure does seem to have some impact.

TABLE 3

ELECTORAL CHARACTERISTICS

City	Mayor/ Manager	Partisan		Ward/ At-large
		Nonpartisan	Partisan	
Albuquerque	Manager	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	At-large
Atlanta*	Mayor	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	At-large
Baltimore	Mayor	Partisan	Partisan	Ward
Boston	Mayor	Partisan	Partisan	At-large
Denver	Mayor	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	Ward
Kansas City, Ka	Commission	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	At-large
Kansas City, Mo	Manager	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	At-large
Milwaukee	Mayor	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	Ward
Nashville	Mayor	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	Ward
San Diego	Manager	Nonpartisan	Nonpartisan	At-large

SOURCE: The Municipal Year Book, 1972, 1978

*Atlanta is considered unreformed for this study due to the powers of the mayor, such as the right to veto legislation. In 1974, a ward system was adopted.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO PAST

	Unreformed			Reformed		
	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)
Overall	31.4	42.1	26.5	28.3	51.7	20.1
Income (\$1000's)						
\$0-5	26.0	43.9	30.1	27.7	45.0	27.3
\$5-10	32.0	42.4	25.6	26.0	54.7	19.3
\$10-15	35.1	41.0	23.9	27.9	53.6	18.6
Over \$15	37.3	38.5	24.2	35.0	52.1	12.8
Education						
8 yrs- high school	27.9	38.8	33.3	24.5	48.0	27.5
High school- some college	32.0	43.9	24.1	27.6	53.5	19.0
Post-college	39.2	44.7	16.1	38.0	50.5	11.5
Race						
White	28.7	42.8	28.5	26.5	52.9	20.6
Nonwhite	38.2	39.9	21.9	32.7	48.3	19.0

SOURCE: Data for this and following tables are from the Inter-University Consortium For Political and Social Research, Citizen Attitude Survey, (ICPSR 7340).

Citizens in unreformed cities had the strongest feelings. They were most likely to see a change in the way their city was run, for better or worse.

An interesting difference is noticeable between the races. Nonwhites in both city types were more likely to feel that the government had gotten better. This was especially true in unreformed cities.

When asked to rate the present performance of their city government, respondents were generally positive (Table 5). In most instances, respondents in reformed cities gave more positive answers, (higher percentages of "excellent," "very good," and "good enough" responses). These answers were consistently more positive in reformed cities.

There is an interesting comparison with the previous question when examining responses by race. While nonwhites were more likely to believe that city government had improved over the years, they were negative in their attitudes toward the present government. This was especially true in unreformed cities, where the strongest negative feelings were exhibited toward the present administration.

If, for the most part, citizens in both types of cities had positive feelings about how their city was run, does structure have any impact upon their feelings about the way their money was spent? As Table 6 demonstrates, respondents in unreformed cities felt very

TABLE 5

RATE WAY CITY IS RUN

	Unreformed				
	Excellent (%)	Very good (%)	Good enough (%)	Not good (%)	Not good at all (%)
Overall	2.2	28.1	40.2	32.2	7.3
Income (\$1000's)					
\$0-5	2.9	18.0	38.2	32.5	8.4
\$5-10	1.7	16.5	41.1	33.7	7.1
\$10-15	1.6	19.6	40.5	30.6	7.7
Over \$15	2.1	21.0	41.8	30.8	4.3
Education					
8 yrs- high school	2.8	17.3	37.7	33.7	8.6
High school- some college	1.8	18.1	41.2	31.8	7.2
Post-college	1.7	20.9	43.6	29.2	4.6
Race					
White	2.0	19.9	41.5	29.6	7.0
Nonwhite	2.7	14.4	37.0	38.2	7.8

TABLE 5-Continued

	Reformed				
	Excellent (%)	Very good (%)	Good enough (%)	Not good (%)	Not good at all (%)
Overall	3.6	20.6	44.0	27.5	4.2
Income (\$1000's)					
\$0-5	3.9	18.0	38.2	32.5	8.4
\$5-10	3.7	18.1	46.3	27.8	4.1
\$10-15	2.9	20.0	46.2	27.6	3.2
Over \$15	4.9	23.9	42.5	26.3	2.4
Education					
8 yrs- high school	5.5	19.6	36.9	31.7	6.3
High school- some college	2.9	19.5	47.0	27.0	3.6
Post-college	3.2	27.0	45.0	21.6	3.2
Race					
White	3.1	20.0	45.7	26.9	4.3
Nonwhite	5.6	21.7	37.5	31.0	4.3

TABLE 6

DO CITIZENS GET MONEY'S WORTH?

	Unreformed		Reformed	
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
Overall	35.2	64.8	49.3	50.7
Income (\$1000's)				
\$0-5	34.7	65.3	47.5	52.5
\$5-10	30.8	69.2	43.7	56.3
\$10-15	39.3	60.7	54.9	45.1
Over \$15	43.3	56.7	57.5	42.5
Education				
8 yrs- high school	30.4	69.6	40.9	59.1
High school- some college	36.5	63.5	48.7	51.3
Post-college	44.8	55.2	66.5	33.5
Race				
White	39.6	60.4	52.1	47.9
Nonwhite	25.1	74.9	37.2	62.8

strongly that they were not getting their money's worth in services. Respondents in reformed cities were split.

Differences appear when examining socioeconomic variables. Those with lower incomes and less education felt they were not getting a proper return for their taxes. Yet there were differences between unreformed and reformed cities. Those in unreformed cities were overwhelmingly negative. Indeed, in all categories, those in unreformed cities were most negative. Among the higher income and the more educated respondents, those in reformed cities answered that they were getting their money's worth.

Some racial differences are noticeable. While both whites and nonwhites in unreformed cities gave negative answers, nonwhites were more negative. Whites in reformed cities gave positive answers, while nonwhites were negative. But nonwhites in reformed cities were not as negative as those in unreformed cities.

Although the respondents were split by structure on service provision, there is little overall difference on the question of neighborhood services compared with the rest of the city (Table 7). Differences appear to be caused by income and education levels, with structure having little impact. There are also strong racial differences.

So far, general questions have been examined. Now, attitudes on specific aspects of city governance will

TABLE 7
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES RATING

	Unreformed			Reformed		
	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)
Overall	23.4	56.3	20.3	26.3	55.4	18.4
Income (\$1000's)						
\$0-5	17.6	60.3	22.1	19.4	62.7	17.9
\$5-10	21.4	57.5	21.1	23.5	55.1	21.4
\$10-15	26.5	54.8	18.7	26.8	55.1	18.1
Over \$15	36.8	45.0	18.2	44.2	43.3	12.4
Education						
8 yrs- high school	17.4	59.7	22.8	15.1	61.4	23.5
High school- some college	23.4	57.1	19.5	28.1	53.8	18.0
Post-college	39.8	44.3	16.0	39.2	51.2	9.7
Race						
White	27.2	58.7	14.2	28.4	56.7	14.9
Nonwhite	15.1	51.3	33.6	17.3	53.0	19.7

will be studied. The first is honesty of government employees. How did citizens perceive the honesty of government workers compared to those in business? All respondents believed workers employed by the city to be as honest as those in business, but there were differences. Those in reformed cities gave higher ratings (Table 8). More than a quarter of the respondents in unreformed cities felt that government employees were less honest than most other people. Education had some influence in reformed cities as negative feelings declined with increases in education. This was not true in unreformed cities.

When asked about neighborhood schools, reformed cities had a higher percentage of "better" responses (Table 9). This was true for all socioeconomic categories. The greatest difference was between the races. While whites and nonwhites in reformed cities were more positive than their counterparts in unreformed cities, nonwhites as a group had twice as many negative answers.

Two questions asked about police protection. The first asked citizens to rate the job of police in protecting people in the neighborhood (Table 10). Those in reformed cities believed that police did "very good" or "good enough." Again, this was true for all socioeconomic categories. Whites and nonwhites had the greatest differences. Almost half of the nonwhite respondents in unreformed cities gave the police negative

TABLE 8

HONESTY OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

COMPARED TO OTHERS

	Unreformed			Reformed		
	More honest (%)	Same (%)	Less honest (%)	More honest (%)	Same (%)	Less honest (%)
Overall	6.3	67.8	25.9	6.0	75.9	18.4
Income (\$1000's)						
\$0-5	8.0	68.8	23.2	8.0	72.9	19.1
\$5-10	5.7	66.9	27.4	5.3	74.8	19.9
\$10-15	5.3	69.7	25.0	5.0	75.2	19.9
Over \$15	6.7	67.3	26.0	6.9	80.8	12.2
Education						
8 yrs-high school	9.4	64.7	26.0	6.8	70.5	22.7
High school-some college	3.9	69.6	26.6	5.1	77.2	17.7
Post-college	6.3	70.3	23.3	8.4	78.2	13.3
Race						
White	5.8	69.9	24.3	5.2	77.2	17.6
Nonwhite	7.3	62.6	30.1	8.3	70.7	21.0

TABLE 9
NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS COMPARED
TO REST OF CITY

	Unreformed			Reformed		
	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not so good (%)
Overall	20.9	61.0	18.1	29.4	58.4	12.2
Income (\$1000's)						
\$0-5	13.3	68.2	18.5	17.3	70.1	12.7
\$5-10	18.6	61.6	19.8	26.1	57.8	16.1
\$10-15	25.3	57.2	17.5	32.9	57.9	9.2
Over \$15	33.9	52.3	13.8	46.8	45.4	7.9
Education						
8 yrs- high school	13.3	69.8	16.9	16.4	70.0	13.6
High school- some college	21.7	58.6	19.7	31.7	55.3	12.9
Post-college	39.0	44.8	16.1	44.0	49.7	6.2
Race						
White	25.4	61.2	13.4	33.8	58.0	8.2
Nonwhite	11.0	60.9	28.1	14.4	59.6	26.0

TABLE 10

RATE POLICE PROTECTION

	Unreformed				Reformed			
	Very good (%)	Good enough (%)	Not so good (%)	Not good at all (%)	Very good (%)	Good enough (%)	Not so good (%)	Not good at all (%)
Overall	25.8	43.5	22.7	8.0	35.0	47.5	14.2	3.5
Income (\$1000's)								
\$0-5	25.8	39.5	25.5	9.3	36.6	42.9	17.2	3.3
\$5-10	24.6	44.8	22.3	8.2	31.8	49.8	14.1	4.3
\$10-15	26.9	45.1	21.4	6.6	37.5	48.2	11.3	3.0
Over \$15	23.5	46.7	23.5	6.2	38.1	37.5	13.1	1.2
Education								
8 yrs-high school	27.3	40.0	22.8	9.9	35.3	43.6	17.0	4.0
High school-some college	25.5	45.1	22.3	7.1	35.8	48.0	12.7	3.5
Post-college	22.4	48.5	23.5	5.6	31.8	50.7	14.8	2.7
Race								
White	30.2	46.6	18.2	4.9	37.2	48.0	12.1	2.1
Nonwhite	15.8	36.5	33.0	14.7	28.9	42.8	22.2	6.2

ratings compared with 23 percent of the whites. Over 25 percent of the nonwhites in reformed cities had negative feelings compared with 14 percent of the whites. Still, there were structural differences. Both whites and nonwhites in reformed cities had higher percentages of positive answers than did those in unreformed cities.

When rating the job of police in fighting crime in their neighborhoods opposed to the rest of the city, most respondents answered "better" or the "same" (Table 11). Respondents in reformed cities had a higher percentage of "same" answers. Citizens in unreformed cities were almost twice as negative. In keeping with the racial differences of the previous question, whites and nonwhites show marked differences. Nonwhites were over three times more negative, with those in unreformed cities the most negative.

Beneath these feeling about services lay the question of taxes. It has been shown that respondents in unreformed cities did not believe that they were getting their money's worth in services. Did they also believe that they were paying too much in taxes? As Table 12 shows, the answer is yes. Fifty-four percent of the citizens in unreformed cities believed taxes were too high. A majority of respondents in reformed cities believed that taxes were about right.

Socioeconomic differences are evident. Those with less education and lower incomes believed taxes were too

TABLE 11
JOB OF POLICE IN NEIGHBORHOOD
COMPARED TO REST OF CITY

	Unreformed			Reformed		
	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not as good (%)	Better (%)	Same (%)	Not as good (%)
Overall	18.4	67.2	14.4	20.0	72.3	7.6
Income (\$1000's)						
\$0-5	14.0	66.1	19.8	15.5	75.1	9.5
\$5-10	18.5	68.2	13.3	21.1	71.5	7.1
\$10-15	22.5	66.1	11.4	19.2	75.1	5.8
Over \$15	21.4	66.8	11.8	28.2	65.2	6.6
Education						
8 yrs- high school	17.2	67.2	15.5	16.9	73.9	9.1
High school- some college	17.8	67.9	14.3	20.5	71.9	7.6
Post-college	24.0	65.0	11.1	23.3	71.4	5.3
Race						
White	21.4	70.2	8.4	22.0	72.7	5.3
Nonwhite	11.7	60.6	27.6	12.2	71.9	15.8

TABLE 12

ARE TAXES ABOUT RIGHT TO PAY FOR SERVICES?

	Unreformed				Reformed			
	Too High (%)	About Right (%)	Too Low (%)	Too High (%)	About Right (%)	Too High (%)	Too Low (%)	
Overall	54.0	38.0	8.1	34.7	55.4		9.9	
Income (\$1000's)								
\$0-5	58.5	36.1	5.4	49.5	46.5		4.0	
\$5-10	56.9	36.3	6.8	34.4	53.8		11.9	
\$10-15	49.2	40.9	9.9	27.7	60.4		11.7	
Over \$15	42.2	42.5	15.4	22.2	65.2		12.3	
Education								
8 yrs-high school	64.0	32.2	3.8	53.7	41.9		4.4	
High school-some college	51.4	40.5	8.1	30.2	60.0		9.9	
Post-college	33.8	45.9	20.3	18.6	61.4		20.0	
Race								
White	49.8	39.7	10.5	28.7	60.3		11.0	
Nonwhite	63.6	33.5	2.8	55.3	38.1		8.8	

high, but those in unreformed cities felt most strongly. Racial differences also exist. A majority of nonwhites in both types of cities felt that taxes were too high compared to a plurality of whites in unreformed cities and just over a quarter of whites in reformed cities. Still, there were differences between the respective groups, depending upon structure.

Competing Explanations

To this point, it appears that the structure of city government has an impact upon citizens' attitudes, measured by the questions examined. Could there be other reasons to explain this relationship?

Consider the questions on police. There are differences between citizens of reformed and unreformed cities. Those in reformed cities felt more positive about the job the police were doing in fighting crime. Why did they feel this way? One answer may be the number of serious crimes reported to police in each city. Do unreformed cities have a higher crime rate? Table 13 shows the number of serious crimes reported to police in 1970 and the crime rate per thousand in the cities under study. Of the top five cities with the highest crime rates, four are unreformed. Perhaps citizens in unreformed cities had reasons to fault their local police.

However, among the bottom five, both Milwaukee and Nashville, unreformed and with large populations, had lower crime rates than two unreformed cities. In fact,

TABLE 13
SERIOUS CRIMES KNOWN TO POLICE, 1970
(PER 1000 PERSONS)

Rank	City	Rate
1	Denver	73.5
2	Baltimore	68.6
3	Boston	59.7
4	Kansas City, Mo	57.2
5	Atlanta	55.1
6	Albuquerque	54.8
7	Kansas City, Ka	46.7
8	Nashville	39.5
9	San Diego	33.3
10	Milwaukee	28.2

SOURCE: County and City Data Book, 1972

Milwaukee, the second most populous city in the study, had the lowest crime rate.

Perceptions and reality do not correspond. While those in Nashville were negative about the police, the crime rate was one of the lowest in the cities studied. In Kansas City, Missouri, approval was high, but so was the crime rate.²⁵ These results are inconclusive. It cannot be said with any confidence that the differences in respondents ratings of police were the results of the crime rate.

Turning to the attitudes on taxes, it was shown that citizens in unreformed cities believed that taxes were too high. Is this their perception, or are they being accurate? MacManus has reported that there are tax rate differences between reformed and unreformed cities. She found that unreformed cities have the highest effective property tax rates.²⁶

Table 14 confirms her findings. It shows the median effective tax rate in the ten cities for fully taxable single-family units. The effective tax rate is calculated by dividing the total tax bill by the sales price of the property. "The tax bill is related to what the

²⁵Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Citizen Attitudes Toward Local Government, Services, and Taxes, (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1974), pp. 160-162.

²⁶Susan A. MacManus, "Tax Structure in American Cities: Levels, Reliance, and Rates," Western Political Quarterly XXX:2 (June 1977), pp. 263-287.

TABLE 14
RANK OF 10 CITIES* BY TAX RATE**

City	Rate
Boston	4.2
Milwaukee	4.1
Baltimore	3.3
Kansas City, Ka	2.6
San Diego	2.1
Atlanta	2.0
Denver	1.9
Albuquerque	1.7
Nashville	1.4

SOURCE: Census of Governments, 1972

*Data on Kansas City, Mo. not available.

**Effective Median Tax Rate on fully taxable single family dwellings. Rate is an expression of the amount of property taxes as a percent of the sales price.

property would be worth in the market (as indicated by the sales price), rather than to what the property is worth in terms of prevailing level of assessment."²⁷

This enables comparisons to be made.

Table 14 also shows the regional differences existing in terms of tax rate. The lowest are found in the South and West, which also have the highest proportion of reformed governments.

Is something more operating within cities that could account for the differences in citizens' attitudes? Is there something about the quality of life within the city that affects how citizens view their home? In the early 1970's, the Midwest Research Institute attempted to rank America's cities on a "quality of life" scale. Cities were given scores in five broad areas: 1) Environment--air, water, and noise pollution indexes, climate, and recreation; 2) Politics--voter turnout, number of newspapers and TV stations, how well local government fought crime and received federal funds; 3) Economics--personal income per capita, unemployment rate, income differences between the center city and suburbs; 4) Health and education--infancy mortality rate, hospital occupancy, percent of population in schools, the percent of nonwhite high school graduates; and

²⁷U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Government 1972, Vol. 2, Taxable Property Values and Assessments-Sales Price Ratios, Part 2, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 16.

5) a mixture of other social components including racial equality, housing conditions, and cultural facilities.²⁸

Table 15 shows the rankings for the cities studied.

There is no real consistency as the cities fall into many different categories.

It appears that only tax rates have any impact on what people are perceiving in their cities. Respondents appear to be cognizant of the fact that taxes are higher in unreformed cities. Crime rate and quality of life do not yield conclusive evidence.

²⁸"Ranking the Cities," Time 29 September, 1975, p. 83.

TABLE 15
QUALITY OF LIFE RANKING FOR THE 10 CITIES*

Rank	City	Rating
8	Denver	Outstanding
10	San Diego	Outstanding
12	Milwaukee	Outstanding
23	Boston	Excellent
35	Kansas City**	Good
45	Atlanta	Adequate
48	Nashville	Adequate
55	Baltimore	Adequate

SOURCE: Adapted from Time, 29 September, 1975

*Rank given is the original among cities with populations over 500,000.

**Kansas City's are combined.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated whether or not the structure of municipal government influences citizen attitudes. If the reformers were correct, citizens in reformed cities should be more satisfied with their local government and the services it provides. To determine if this was true, attitudes on the municipal government in the past and present, along with attitudes on specific services such as schools, police, honesty in government and attitudes toward taxes were examined. In all cases but one, the hypothesis was confirmed. While the differences are sometimes relatively small, they do show that citizens in reformed cities felt more positive and satisfied with their city. Only on the question of comparing the present government to the past was there a deviation from the hypothesis.

Other explanations for this finding were examined. Prior variables, such as crime rate in the city and its quality of life were not a real factor in the results. Only when examining tax rates did real differences emerge. Tax rates were different in reformed and unreformed cities, but just how much this influenced service provision, and, in turn, citizen attitudes, is a subject for further research.

The influence of socioeconomic variables was studied. Although they did influence attitudes, structure continued to have some influence. In most cases, respondents in reformed cities were more satisfied with their city.

What is puzzling is the attitude of nonwhites in unreformed cities. They believed that the city was being run better than in the past, but they consistently rated present services negatively. They may have been responding to the gains made during the 1960's and were expressing their frustrations over the fact that the gains had not kept pace with expectations. Or, it may be that unreformed cities were responding to segments of their population previously ignored. Yet, nonwhites in reformed cities showed similar characteristics. Were both city types finally responding to nonwhites, or were nonwhites, as a group, responding to something happening throughout society? The answer probably is a combination of both.

Since reformed structures of municipal government do have an influence on citizen attitudes, what are the consequences of this finding? It is apparent that they have not solved the problem of involving nonwhites in governing the city, but reformed cities do seem to respond better to their demands than do unreformed ones.

Even with this problem, it appears that reformed cities do have something to offer. This is the reformer's goal of a government serving the common weal. Citizens

in reformed cities perceived that their interests were being served, as well as the city's interest as a whole. Whether this will remain so is to be seen. As the cities of the South and West (where most reformed governments are located), grow and special-interest politics proliferates, reformed governments will be hard pressed to maintain the ability to serve all. As for unreformed cities, they should draw together their diverse parts and attempt to raise the level of satisfaction among their citizens. Whether or not reformed cities will be able to keep the level of citizen satisfaction high, and if unreformed cities will be able to raise theirs, is a question only time, and another survey, can answer.

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